

HINDI IMPOSITION PAPERS

Volume 13

**Hindi Imposition and Opposition
Around India
plus
Special Favours to Hindi-Centric
Industries**

Thanjai Nalankilli

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Volume 13 **Hindi Imposition and Opposition Around India** **plus** **Special Favours to Hindi-Centric Industries**

edited by
Thanjai Nalankilli

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Numbers in parentheses indicate number of articles by the author in this volume.

Hindi Imposition Papers

All You Wanted to Know about Hindi imposition and More

This fifteen-volumes book contains over 100 articles on the subject of Hindi imposition in India. Researchers, scholars, historians and students who want to get an in-depth understanding of India's language policy may go through these articles one by one. Others may casually browse through these volumes, stopping to read those articles that interest them. You may find lots of interesting and useful information in these articles.

Even if you are reading these articles a hundred years from now, these articles will tell you the history of the development and evolution of India's Hindi imposition policies and opposition to it, starting from 1938 to 2019. This is part of Indian history. India's language problem is an ongoing problem. We do not know where all this will lead to and how this will end.

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Preface

Thanjai Nalankilli

This volume consists of two parts.

Part I: Hindi Imposition and Opposition Around India

Reaction to Hindi imposition varies from state to state. Reactions range from diehard opposition to Hindi imposition in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu to enthusiastic support in Hindi states. In recent years people of Karnataka took up the mantle and protested Hindi imposition with some local success. There are some recent activities against Hindi imposition in West Bengal by couple of emerging groups. There is limited opposition in some other states too.

There is a Facebook group on the Internet, "Promote Linguistic Equality: Hindi is Not the National language of India", with members from many non-Hindi states, that opposes Hindi imposition. An offshoot of the Facebook group is the organization "Campaign for Language Equality and Rights (CLEAR)". It held a few small conferences to discuss the subject. Some activists occasionally initiate tweets like #StopHindiImposition on Twitter (Internet) and they get top of the tweets list in major non-Hindi cities like Bengaluru and Chennai.

Articles in Part I discuss reaction to Hindi imposition in a few states.

Part II: Special Favours to Hindi-Centric Industries

By "Hindi-Centric Industries", we are referring to Hindi movie production, Hindi books/magazines publications, Hindi website development, etc. India's language policy of "everyone should learn Hindi, everywhere Hindi, everything in Hindi" helps Hindi-related companies in these areas while choking comparable companies serving other Indian languages. Articles in Part II discuss this aspect.

(First Published: July 2019)

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1. Opposition to Hindi Imposition in Karnataka (How Indian Government is Choking off Kannada Language in Karnataka)

This is Part I of a two-parts article. Each part is self-contained.

Part I

Karnataka Governor Addresses the State Legislature in Hindi and the Big Picture

Thanjai Nalankilli

Indian government dilutes the use of Kannada and infuses Karnataka with Hindi. Slowly Hindi will replace Kannada everywhere except within Kannadiga homes. (Kannadigas - People whose mother tongue is Kannada.)

OUTLINE (Part I)

1. Opposition to Governor's Speech in Hindi
2. Our Commentary
3. The Big Picture

1. Opposition to Governor's Speech in Hindi

Karnataka State Governor Mr. Vajbhairu Vala made his Indian Republic Day speech in Hindi on January 26, 2015. He addressed the Joint Session of Karnataka Legislature in Hindi on February 2, 2015 [Tehelka.com (a widely read Indian news web site); February 4, 2015]. The reason given was that he was not so fluent in English (but he does know English) and did not know the state official language Kannada. His mother tongue is Gujarati (not Hindi).

Although there was some "protesting murmurs" from some Karnataka politicians, not a single member of the Karnataka state legislature (MLA - Member of Legislative Assembly) boycotted the governor's speech.

Former Chairman of the Legislative Council, Veeranna Mathikatti believed that governor's Hindi address was an indirect imposition of the Hindi on Karnataka. K Shivalinge Gowda, MLA said that not more than 10 per cent of the legislators may understand Hindi well. The state government said that Hindi, English and Kannada versions of the Governor's speech would be provided to all the members of the legislature. [Deccan Herald; January 29, 2015]

Assembly Speaker Kagodu Thimappa seemed to justify the Hindi speech saying that the choice of language was the prerogative of the governor... the Constitution has given him the right to deliver address in any language which is recognized [Deccan Herald January 29, 2015].

There were some vocal protests from a small number of pro-Kannada groups. Several activists of the Kannada Rakshana Vedike protested at the assembly gate. President of the Kannada Rakshana Vedike, Narayana Gowda, said that “the Hindi speeches seem like a part of a larger conspiracy to impose Hindi in the state through Raj Bhavan (governor's office)” [Tehelka.com; February 4, 2015].

UPDATE 1: Hindi domination continues. This is the scenario two years later. Governor Vajubhai Vala addressed the joint session of the Karnataka State Legislature in Hindi. (India Times; February 7, 2017)

Who do we blame? Do we blame the governor, or the state chief minister and the entire members of the legislative assembly who did not walk out in protest?

UPDATE 2: Karnataka governor Vajubhai Vala's letterhead is in English and Hindi only; no Kannada. This is an insult to the state's official language Kannada and a slap on all Kannadigas. State Chief Minister should request the President of India to remove him as Governor of Karnataka. [Kannadigas - People whose mother tongue is Kannada.]

2. Our Commentary

Our position is that the governor should know the state official language. The very ideal of linguistic states is "mocked" when the head of the state (the governor) does not know the state language. We would like to mention in this context that many IAS and IPS officers who hold top administrative and law-enforcement positions in the state government (such as district collectors and assistant inspector generals of police) also are from other states and cannot read or write letters and reports in the state official language. At least one judge in the State High Court is appointed from another state and most likely do not know the state language. These appointments are mockery of the very concept of linguistic states. It is our opinion that the Indian government is deliberately sabotaging the use of state language at higher levels of state government offices. By the way, these IAS and IPS officers have to learn Hindi even if they are working in non-Hindi states.

Let us, for the sake of this discussion, agree to a governor who does not know the state language. Instead of speaking in Hindi and providing translations in English and Kannada, why didn't Governor Vajubhai Vala speak in his mother tongue Gujarati and provide translations in English and Kannada? That is more acceptable to us. Him speaking in Hindi seems to indicate a further attempt of thrusting Hindi on the people and legislators of Karnataka.

I think that both the Former Chairman of the Legislative Council, Veeranna Mathikati, and the President of Kannada Rakshana Vedike, Narayana Gowda, hit the nail right on the head when they correctly pointed out that it is part of Hindi imposition on Karnataka.

We demand that laws be enacted at the central and state level that all those who work in a state must have working knowledge of the state official language.

3. The Big Picture

We shall not look at these incidences of the governor speaking in Hindi at the Indian Republic Day celebration and to the Joint Session of Karnataka Legislature in isolation. We see a larger picture of indirect Hindi imposition and attempts to dilute the use of state languages. Here are a few pieces of related information (not a complete list).

Indian government has put up some **Hindi billboards** in the streets of Bengaluru (Bangalore) advertising central government projects. There is no Kannada there. Is not Kannada the best language to advertise in the streets of Karnataka? I don't think the main purpose of these billboards is to inform the people of Karnataka about Indian government projects but to flaunt Hindi in the non-Hindi state of Karnataka. This seems to be part of the Indian Government's effort to push Hindi into non-Hindi states through indirect means. Indian government approved 700 crore Rupees in 2011 to promote Hindi through different advertising mediums like FM Radio, televisions and outdoor advertisements such as promotional hoardings at railway station, bus stands and bus stops. (Jargon Post; July 30, 2011) (1 crore = 10 million)

Southern Railways, owned and operated by the Indian Government, is also in the fray to thrust Hindi into non-Hindi states. It posts safety information in Hindi and English only in trains running within Karnataka State (for example, trains traveling from Sagar to Bengaluru - as seen in 2014). It is almost criminal not to post such important information in the local language.

As of 2014, **destination signs in some trains** running within the state are in Hindi and English only. Destination signs in trains running between Bengaluru and Chennai (Madras) are in Hindi and English only. Bengaluru is in Karnataka and Chennai is in Tamil Nadu (both non-Hindi states). The destination names should have been written in Kannada and Tamil, state languages of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. How can passengers understand where the train is going? Is it necessary for Kannadigas and Tamils to know Hindi or English even to ride trains between their home states while Hindi people can read the destinations and safety posters in their mother tongue several hundred miles away from home?

Indian government owned Canara Bank's **Cash Deposit Kiosk** at JP Nagara Branch, Bengaluru (Bangalore) is in Hindi and English only. It is Karnataka. Why no Kannada?

Indian government's goal is very clear, "Make all Indian languages except Hindi useless so people will rush to learn Hindi just to live in their own states". If anyone has any doubt about Indian government's nefarious goal, read the following incidence.

A Parliamentary Sub-Committee Meeting was held in Mysore (Karnataka State) on July 5, 2008 to review the "implementation" of Hindi as per the official language policy. There was a large board written in Kannada. It says, "Maneya Vyavahara Kannadadalli,

Karyalayada Vyavahara Raajabhasheyalli". It means, "**Use Kannada at home, use Rajabhasha in office**". They are referring to Hindi as the Rajabhasha.

Indian government's nefarious aim is very clear. Dilute the use of Kannada in its own land and infuse Karnataka with Hindi. Slowly but surely Hindi will replace Kannada everywhere except within Kannadiga homes.

Unless the people, politicians and the government of Karnataka mount an effective campaign against direct and indirect Hindi imposition, the future of Kannada is not very bright.

Part II of this two-parts article is the next Chapter (Chapter 2)

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2.

Opposition to Hindi Imposition in Karnataka (How Indian Government is Choking off Kannada Language in Karnataka)

This is Part II of a two-parts article. Each part is self-contained.

Part II

Examples, Examples and More Examples

Thanjai Nalankilli

Indian government dilutes the use of Kannada and infuses Karnataka with Hindi. Slowly Hindi will replace Kannada everywhere except within Kannadiga homes. (Kannadigas - People whose mother tongue is Kannada.)

OUTLINE (Part II)

4. Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) Declares "Black Day"
5. Kannadigas Protest Indian Railways Hiring Practices
6. Samaanya Kannadiga Stands up against Hindi onslaught in Bengaluru
7. Hindi Milestones at Karnataka Highways
8. Hindi at an Insurance Corporation
9. Ujjwala What?
10. IDBI Bank Uses Hindi but No Kannada
11. Hindi on National Highways Tollgates
12. Kannada in Indian Passports
13. Bank Staff Attack Customer for Wanting to Use Kannada in Karnataka
14. Final Note

4. Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) Declares "Black Day"

Indian government celebrates September 14 every year as Hindi Day (Hindi Diwas) to commemorate Hindi declared India's official language on September 14, 1949. In 2018, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV), a pro-Kannada organization in Karnataka, called that day "Black Day" and launched statewide protests against Hindi imposition. As part of the protests, KRV activists blackened Hindi letters on milestones along National Highway NH 48 near Davanagere and signs on other highway stretches in Chikkaballapur, Kolar, Mysuru (Mysore), Shivamoga and Yadgir. (Times of India, September 14, 2018)

I suggest that anti-Hindi imposition groups in every non-Hindi state observe September 14 as "Black Day" until the Indian constitution is amended to end Hindi imposition once and forever.

5. Kannadigas Protest Indian Railways Hiring Practices

Kannada activists staged protests against Indian Railways hiring practices in the South Western Region (Karnataka State falls within this region). They claimed that out-of-state candidates, especially those from the north Indian state of Bihar, are hired in large numbers; they demanded that local candidates must be hired. Demonstrators stormed into several railway stations in the state, delayed trains and shouted slogans against the Indian central government and Indian Railways (The Hindu; January 9, 2008). Hindi is one of Bihar's official languages and widely known in the state. There is no requirement that out-of-state employees learn Kannada for most jobs and so local people have difficulty communicating with them.

A few years before similar demonstrations took place in Assam and Maharashtra states against the hiring of large numbers of candidates from the Hindi-belt region; those demonstrators also demanded the hiring of local candidates.

6. Samaanya Kannadiga Stands up against Hindi onslaught in Bengaluru

A major all-India real estate company, Shriram Properties, placed a full-page newspaper advertisement on June 26, 2016 in Bengaluru with a Hindi slogan. Samaanya Kannadiga, a pro-Kannada group, took offense to the emphasis on Hindi and wrote to the company. The company wrote back thanking them for "reminding us about our duty towards Karnataka State" and stated, "it is not our intention to hurt anyone's sentiment". It promised to give 'weightage' to Kannada in its upcoming advertisements in digital, print and electronic media. (theNewsim.com; June 27, 2016; this is a multi-language South Indian news portal)

Every non-Hindi state and city should have a language-protection group like Samaanya Kannadiga, to keep the onslaught of Hindi into our states. Businesses usually listen to our complaints because they are here to sell their products and services, and do not want negative publicity or boycotts.

7. Hindi Milestones at Karnataka Highways

Indian government converted the Bengaluru-Mysuru state highway to a national highway in 2014. It replaced the Kannada-English milestones with Hindi-English milestones in December 2015. (The New Indian Express; December 26, 2015).

Some Kannada activists, belonging to the group Samanya Kannadiga, changed Hindi to Kannada in some milestones (The Newsminute.com; January 11, 2016). This is reminiscent of large scale tarring of Hindi signs in post offices and railway stations in Tamil Nadu during the 1950s. In some cities almost every Hindi sign was blackened with tar. Of course, the Indian government painted the Hindi back.

Why do we have to protest, demonstrate, plead and beg to have our basic right to have our language in highways, railways, banks, etc? Instead of demonstrating and pleading ever time Hindi politicians of the Indian government sneeze, we should once and for ever

demand that all Indian government transactions should be in the state language and English.

8. Hindi at an Insurance Corporation

S. Suresh Kumar, member of the Karnataka State Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Rajajinagar Assembly Constituency and a former minister, wrote to the Indian government labour minister on November 24, 2015 (Letter No. HO/1025/2015) about Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESI Corporation) that provides health insurance services to workers in Karnataka. He said that ESIC was hiring employees from outside the state who do not know the state language Kannada and these employees are not able to communicate with workers and their families in Kannada. He asked the minister to direct ESIC to hire from Karnataka State.

9. Ujjwala What?

Hindi advertisement boards about Indian Government's Ujjwala scheme are placed in Mandya, Karnataka (2016). Where is Kannada, the state language of Karnataka? This writer does not know what Ujjwala means but the Indian government is spending 8000 crore Rupees on Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

10. IDBI Bank Uses Hindi but No Kannada

Some IDBI Bank offices in Karnataka added Hindi signs in addition to English on some boards (state language Kannada is omitted) in 2016. The numerals are not in the international numerals but in devanagiri numeral. This is unconstitutional because constitution was clear that official language is Hindi in Devanagiri script with international numerals.

11. Hindi on National Highways Tollgates

Ms Umashree, Kannada and Culture Minister of Karnataka, asked the Indian government to urge National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to employ locals at the tollgates because of friction between local drivers and non-Karnataka employees at tollgates (Deccan Herald; September 18, 2016). India government and its agencies employ large numbers of out-of-staters who do not know the state language and this has been a problem for local people. Many employees at Indian government owned banks, Life Insurance Corporation, railway, National Highways Authority, coastguard and central police do not know the local language and is a hardship for local people who have to deal with them.

12. Kannada in Indian Passports

Kannada Development Authority (KDA) chairman Professor S G Siddaramaiah said that passports issued in Karnataka should be in English and Kannada (The New Indian

Express, March 22, 2018). At present (2018) Indian passports are in English and Hindi only throughout India.

13. Bank Staff Attack Customer for Wanting to Use Kannada in Karnataka

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara said last week that a man was attacked by a bank staff in Kolar for asking to carry out a transaction in Kannada. (TheNewsMinute.com; August 15, 2018)

14. Final Note

We discussed some indirect Hindi imposition in Karnataka in this article. There is also direct Hindi imposition. Non-Hindi employees of the Indian government as well as Indian government undertakings such as Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), government owned banks, railway pressure its non-Hindi employees to pass Hindi examinations and do certain percentage of work in Hindi. These non-Hindi employees suffer in silence and the general public does not know much about it.

This is the end of the fourth part of this two-parts article.

(First Published: March 2015; Updated: November 2018)

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3.

Hindi Will Destroy Marathi Language, Culture and Identity in Mumbai and Maharashtra

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Mumbai Taxi Cab Drivers, Hindi and Marathi
2. Power of Hindi Politicians
3. Hindification and De-Marathification of Mumbai
4. Official Language of Mumbai City Municipal Corporation
5. Hindi in Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly
6. Mumbai is a Metropolis (Metropolitan City)
7. Consequences of Indian Government's Language Policy
8. Decline of Marathi Language Study and Use
9. Decline of Marathi Literature
10. Loss of Marathi Culture and Identity
11. What Can Marathi People Do to Protect Marathi Language, Culture and Identity?
12. Message to Other Non-Hindi States

1. Mumbai Taxi Cab Drivers, Hindi and Marathi

Chief Minister of Maharashtra State, Mr. Ashok Chavan, told reporters on January 20, 2010 that taxi driver permits would be issued only to those who can read and write Marathi, the language of Maharashtra area for over a thousand years. There are over 200000 taxi drivers in the city of Mumbai (Bombay) and many of them are from Hindi states who have come to Maharashtra seeking jobs. Most of them cannot read or write Marathi. General Secretary of Mumbai Taxi Drivers Association strongly opposed the new requirement and said, "These are laborers. They cannot go to school and learn Marathi." [Thina Thanthi (Tamil newspaper); January 21, 2010] We have to wonder. These taxi drivers must have passed drivers' test. If they can learn the rules of the road, why can't they learn the language of the state? How can a Maharashtrian visiting their state's crown jewel Mumbai (Bombay) converse with taxi drivers to go from railway station to a hotel or from bus station to a hotel? Hindi politicians want people all over India, including the non-Hindi state of Maharashtra, to learn Hindi and communicate with them in their language while they refuse to learn the language of the soil - Marathi. This arrogance, this imperial attitude, pervades not only among Mumbai residents from Hindi states but also among most Hindi people who migrate to work in other non-Hindi states [Several examples may be found in Volume 9]. Can a Marathi go to the Hindi city Lucknow and expect to drive taxicabs there without knowing Hindi? No, absolutely not. Shirish Parkar of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) correctly pointed out, "People from other states come to Maharashtra because of their need, not ours. It should be made imperative for them to learn Marathi."

2. Power of Hindi Politicians

Opposition to the Marathi requirement came not only from those workers who came to Mumbai from Hindi states but also from Hindi politicians in Hindi-belt states. Chief Minister of Maharashtra reeled back from this "assault" from Hindi workers and politicians, and withdrew the order the very next day. The power of Hindi politicians runs not only in their own states but throughout India. At the 83rd All-India Marathi Literary Meet held in Pune on March 28, 2010, former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Manohar Joshi, said, "The state government wants to implement laws [making Marathi compulsory] but it is afraid of the Centre [Indian Government]." [The Hindu; March 29, 2010] Why should a chief minister elected by the people of the state and have a majority in the state legislative assembly be afraid? Indian government can dismiss any state government (and thus the chief minister). Indian parliament is dominated by Hindi politicians and thus they control the Indian government [Volume 12]. If a state government acts in a manner that is detrimental to the interests of Hindi people, Indian government could dismiss that state government. This threat hangs over every chief minister and they do consider it while making decisions.

3. Hindification and De-Marathification of Mumbai

Some who opposed the Marathi language requirement said that Mumbai is a metropolitan city and so does not belong to Maharashtra but to India and there should be no requirement of Marathi. At the very same time that Hindi politicians oppose Marathi language requirement for Mumbai taxi drivers, the very same Hindi politicians support the Indian government requirement that all employees of Indian government and Indian-government controlled enterprises must pass Hindi examinations. Indian government owned enterprises include Indian Railways, airports, nationalized banks, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and many more; they employ hundreds of thousands of employees throughout India.

Let us examine this double standard of Hindi politicians. A taxi cab driver in the streets of the Maharashtrian city of Mumbai should not be required to learn Marathi but those who work in the State Bank branches in Mumbai must pass Hindi examinations; there is no requirement that they know Marathi although most customers at these branches are likely Marathi speakers. Employees at the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) branches in Mumbai must know Hindi but knowledge of Marathi is not a requirement although many of its customers are Marathi speakers. Now go to the railway station. There also employees must know Hindi but no requirement that the stationmaster or ticket clerks or any employee know Marathi. Go to Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA). All customs and immigration officials should know Hindi but no requirement for Marathi. Embark on any Indian-government owned Air India flight to anywhere. All flight attendants must know Hindi but most do not know Marathi. This is the unfair language policy of India and any attempt by states to enforce their linguistic identity is opposed by Hindi politicians. This policy makes the language of the soil--Marathi--unnecessary and useless in Mumbai but a language from hundreds of miles away, Hindi, is made essential

and necessary. In other words Mumbai, the crown jewel of Maharashtra, is de-Marathified and Hindi-fied.

4. Official Language of Mumbai City Municipal Corporation

While opposing Marathi language requirement for Mumbai taxi drivers, Mumbai residents from Hindi states want to make Hindi an official language of Mumbai City Municipal Corporation. These people came to Mumbai to earn a living. Instead of learning the local language they want Mumbai City Municipal Corporation to communicate with them in their mother tongue. The audacity and arrogance of Hindus! There are Tamils, Bengalis, Punjabis, Telugus, ... who live in Mumbai but none of these people demand that their language be made an official language of the city. Would the Hindi city Delhi make Marathi or any other Indian language an official language because large numbers of them live in Delhi? No. Then what right do Hindi people have to ask Mumbai to make Hindi an official language of Mumbai? Only linguistic group in India to make such a demand is Hindi speakers. People who go to another state to earn a living must learn the local language; they shall not demand that local people learn their language. Shirish Parkar of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) is correct when he said, "People from other states come to Maharashtra because of their need, not ours. It should be made imperative for them to learn Marathi."

5. Hindi in Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly

In October 2009, Samajwadi Party MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), Mr. Abu Asim Azmi, demanded that he should be given the legislative documents in Hindi, as he is not fluent in Marathi. According to his own admission, he was living in Maharashtra for 40 years and had not learnt Marathi. Linguistic states were formed in the 1950s so state business could be conducted in the state language and all major languages of India get their due place and develop as modern languages. Politicians serving in the Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly must learn the state official language, and not demand that the language of the state where they were born be used. This destroys the very core of the formation of linguistic states.

6. Mumbai is a Metropolis (Metropolitan City)

Some who opposed Marathi requirement for taxi drivers argued that Mumbai is a metropolitan city (large, busy city) and so Marathi knowledge should not be a requirement. Metropolis or not, Mumbai is a Maharashtrian city and just because it is now a major business and cultural centre it shall not be de-Marathified and Hindified. Paris is a metropolitan city but every taxi driver knows French. Tokyo is a metropolitan city but every taxi driver knows Japanese.

If Mumbai is a metropolitan city and thus Marathi should not be a requirement for taxi driver license, why is Hindi a requirement to work in Mumbai railway stations? Why is Hindi a requirement to work in Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport

(CSIA)? Why are flight announcements made in Hindi in Air India flights from and to Mumbai? (By the way, Air India refuses to make flight announcements in Marathi.)

7. Consequences of Indian Government's Language Policy

So far we discussed the current language situation in Mumbai and the ongoing tussle between Marathi and Hindi in Mumbai. Pro-Marathi camp wants to make the language of the soil, Marathi, a requirement for at least some jobs in Mumbai. Pro-Hindi camp wants to make Marathi an "unnecessary language" for employment and business in Mumbai while making Hindi a "required language" at least for jobs in Indian government establishments in Mumbai such as railway stations, airport and banks. What are the consequences if the pro-Hindi camp succeeds in sidelining Marathi in Mumbai?

8. Decline of Marathi Language Study and Use

When knowledge of Marathi becomes unnecessary to get and hold most jobs in Mumbai and at the same time Hindi is a requirement for holding tens of thousands of jobs at Indian government establishments, parents would make sure that their children are proficient in English and Hindi and neglect Marathi study. This is not because Marathi parents love English/Hindi over their mother tongue; they do so because Marathi is becoming non-essential to get jobs. Make Marathi essential to get and hold jobs in Maharashtra whether private jobs or state government jobs or Indian central government jobs, parents would make sure that their children are proficient in Marathi.

Neglect of Marathi starts in major cities but will soon spread to other regions of Maharashtra. Generation after generation, within the next few generations, Marathi would become a language just spoken at home, while English and Hindi would reign as the language of education and business. Hindi would never meet the fate of Marathi because Hindi is a requirement for hundreds of thousands of jobs at Indian government establishments throughout India. Only way to protect Marathi from being relegated to the backyards is to make Marathi a requirement to get and hold jobs in Maharashtra whether with private businesses or state government or Indian central government.

9. Decline of Marathi Literature

Once Marathi is neglected in schools, readership of Marathi literature would decline. If only a few are reading Marathi literature, very few writers would opt to write in Marathi but would choose to write in English and Hindi. The rich classical literature in Marathi would also feel the effect. In the next and the following generations, fewer and fewer Marathis would be able to appreciate or even understand classic Marathi literature. Marathi classics would collect dust in libraries. Only way to enrich Marathi language is through the creation of new modern literature and studying and analyzing classical literature. Government subsidies to Marathi literature creation and studies would only be a cosmetic solution, the real solution is to make Marathi an essential language for business and employment in Maharashtra.

10. Loss of Marathi Culture and Identity

Literature is not just entertainment; this is especially true of classic literature. Embedded within the classic literature are historical information, heritage and cultural roots. Much of the Maharashtra population in two or three generation may not or cannot read their classics and would not have an appreciation for their literature and heritage. A people who do not know their roots, culture and heritage would soon lose their identity as a people. This sad state of affair awaits the Marathi people if effective action is not taken by the Maharashtrian government and people on the language front now. The current tussle over Marathi language requirement for Mumbai taxi cab drivers is just the beginning of a tug of war over the protection of Marathi identity of Mumbai and the state. If Mumbai is de-Marathified today, the entire state of Maharashtra would follow suit over the decades.

11. What Can Marathi People Do to Protect Marathi Language, Culture and Identity?

A systematic and carefully planned movement is necessary to protect Marathi language, culture and identity in Mumbai and the entire Maharashtra. Periodic or sporadic protests here and there over specific issues like Marathi language requirement for taxi drivers, compulsory Marathi courses at schools, Marathi name boards in shops, etc. would not solve the problem. The root causes of the problem should be addressed.

1)

Education used to be under the exclusive domain of states. Then it was moved under the joint domains of state and central governments. Education should be brought back under the exclusive domain of state government, and all schools, universities and institutions of higher education should be under state jurisdiction. Only then will Marathi language receive its due place in the educational system. Indian government shall devolve more taxes to states so they may fund all educational institutions from primary schools to institutions of higher learning. States need not have to beg the central government for funds.

2)

Everyone working in Maharashtra should be able to read and write Marathi well, whether they are employed by private business, municipalities, state government or central government.

3)

All communication between Indian central government offices in Maharashtra and residents of Maharashtra shall be in Marathi.

State government does not have the power to implement these steps. Only the Indian parliament could enact laws and amend the constitution to achieve these goals. This writer, who has studied Indian government's language policies and actions over the years, is of the opinion that Indian parliament, dominated by Hindi politicians (although not a

majority), would NOT do so. Marathi people should either accept that Marathi language would continue to decline in Maharashtra or chart a course of action to protect Marathi.

12. Message to Other Non-Hindi States

Today it is Mumbai. Tomorrow it would be Calcutta, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai. All major cities would be Hindified and the state languages sidelined. This destructive process would spread from the major cities to other areas of the states. In fact it is already happening in Bangalore and Chennai (I am not familiar with Calcutta and Hyderabad). All non-Hindi states should support the Maharashtrian people in their move to protect their Marathi identity instead of watching the events from sidelines.

(First Published: May 2010)

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4. Indian Government and Hindi Speakers in Assam

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. The News
2. Questions and Concerns

1. The News

The National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam contains names of Indian citizens residing in the northeastern state of Assam. It was prepared decades ago primarily to identify illegal migrants from other countries; it is now being updated.

Indian Government Home minister Rajnath Singh called Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal to ensure that no Hindi-speaking or Indian citizen is left out of the National Register of Citizens. The chief minister assured him that no Hindi-speaking or Indian citizen would be left out. He also agreed to look into the request to appoint people familiar with Hindi and Urdu so that the claims phase passes off smoothly. (The Telegraph; August 15, 2018)

2. Questions and Concerns

This news raises several questions about the seemingly "special status" of Hindi and Hindi-speakers in India.

2.1)

Indian government wants "to ensure that no Hindi-speaking or Indian citizen is left out of the National Register of Citizens". Why not just say, "Ensure that no Indian citizen is left out of the National Register of Citizens"? Why specifically mention Hindi? This attitude of singling out Hindi language and people for special mention prevails within the Indian government. So many times we have heard Indian government officials saying "Hindi and other Indian languages". Why not just say Indian languages? Why single out Hindi for special mention? We know it is the official language of India. That does not mean Hindi language or people should be singled out for special mention? All people should be equal in India, irrespective of their mother tongue.

2.2)

Also does this mean that Hindi speaking migrants in Assam be automatically considered Indian citizens while non-Hindi speaking migrants should prove their citizenship? Is knowledge of Hindi sufficient evidence of Indian citizenship? (We have heard a decade

or so ago that some immigration officials at New Delhi airport asking questions in Hindi to verify if someone is an Indian citizen.) Sizable population in Nepal knows Hindi. Suppose some of them came and settled in Assam, should they be automatically considered Indians because of their knowledge of Hindi?

2.3)

Indian Government Home minister Rajnath Singh wants officers knowing Hindi be appointed to evaluate claims of Hindi speakers. At the very same time Indian government operated Indian Railways prints unreserved tickets in Hindi and English only (no Assamese). Indian Railways prints reservation lists in Hindi and English only (no Assamese). Also many Indian government owned banks do not have Assamese option in their ATMs (Hindi and English only). Some bank employees posted in non-Hindi states do not know the state language. Assam Chief Minister should have asked Indian government to rectify these discriminatory language practices first.

2.4)

A representative of Hindi speakers in Assam said that migration of Hindi-speaking people to Assam began during British rule (The Telegraph; August 15, 2018). Many Hindi speakers living in Assam today are their decedents. Why have they not learned Assamese yet? May be learning Assamese should be a condition for allowing them to live and work in Assam. (Today there is substantial migration of Hindi state labourers into South India. Many simply do not learn the state language. Proficiency of the state language should be a condition for employment. We hope that state governments would act on it.)

2.5)

Why is the Home Minister of India, considered the second most powerful minister, second only to the Prime Minister, throwing his weight around and pressuring the Chief Minister of Assam to favourably consider the requests or grievances of Hindi speakers in Assam. It is a matter between the government of Assam and the Hindi-speaking residents there. Why is the Home Minister of India interfering in the matter on behalf of Hindi speakers? Is he not the minister for all Indian, not just Hindi-Indians.

There is substantial migration from Hindi states to non-Hindi South India and Maharashtra in recent years. Will the Indian government use its power to pressure state governments on behalf of these migrants? This should raise concern and sound alarms in the hearts of non-Hindi state chief ministers.

Indian government should be for all the citizens of India, not just for Hindi speakers.

(First Published: October 2018)

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5. Hindi Supremacy in Kerala

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Background
2. Hindi in Kerala State Legislative Assembly
3. Why We Oppose Hindi in Kerala State Assembly?
4. Hindi in Kerala Police Stations
5. Why We Oppose Hindi in Kerala Police Stations?
6. Where is Malayalam in Medical College Entrance Examinations?
7. Kerala Stands Up Against Hindi Supremacy
8. Analysis and Recommendations

1. Background

Kerala (Keralam) is a non-Hindi state in Southern India. Malayalam is the mother tongue of most people. Among the South Indian states, Kerala seems to be the most lax in opposing Hindi imposition. Not only was the Kerala government lax in opposing Indian government's Hindi imposition, it goes out of the way to insert Hindi into state government affairs; very rare in South India. Things seem to have taken a U-turn after the 2016 state election and change of government. Let us wait and see.

2. Hindi in Kerala State Legislative Assembly

In October 2014, a member of the state legislative assembly (MLA) asked a question in Hindi in the state legislative assembly. The deputy speaker said that Hindi could not be used in the assembly, as it's not an official language of the assembly. Well and good. After this incident, the then chief minister Oommen Chandy (Congress Party) said that rules should be changed to allow Hindi. He added that it would send a bad message if it was not done. (Deccan Herald; October 8, 2014) [This is not Hindi imposition of the Indian Government. It is the doing of the Kerala chief minister. We do not blame the Indian government for it.]

3. Why We Oppose Hindi in Kerala State Assembly?

In the opinion of this writer, addition of Hindi would send a wrong message that Malayalis are bowing to Hindi hegemony/supremacy and have accepted third class citizen status in India. Our opposition to Hindi in Kerala assembly is because of a special reason.

Malayali or other non-Hindi Members of the Indian Parliament (MP) cannot speak in the Indian parliament in their mother tongue without giving 24 notice of the intention, and

even with such a notice cannot ask follow-up or secondary questions in the mother tongue. Indian parliament belongs to all the people of India, not just to the people of Hindi states; yet our use of our mother tongue is restricted. Then why should we allow Hindi in our state assemblies?

Chief minister Oommen Chandy's (Congress Party) acceptance of Hindi hegemony/supremacy is in stark contrast to the stance of former chief minister of Travancore-Cochin, Pattom Thanu Pillai (Socialist Party), who said in the 1950s, "Hindi is as much alien to South Indians as English is to Indians". (Travancore-Cochin evolved into Kerala after the formation of linguistic states.)

4. Hindi in Kerala Police Stations

In 2015, some police stations in Kerala hired Hindi teachers to teach Hindi to police constables so that migrants from Hindi states may communicate with state police (Indian Express; June 10, 2015). Though it may be a good idea, it should be put in proper perspective as to what the Indian government controlled by Hindi politicians is doing. [Again, teaching Hindi to Kerala police is not by Indian government order but by the Kerala state government that seems to have accepted second class status for non-Hindi languages and peoples.]

5. Why We Oppose Hindi in Kerala Police Stations?

While Kerala police are taught Hindi to serve Hindi migrants coming from a thousand miles away to make a living in our land, Indian government is posting security and police officials in Kerala who cannot talk to local population in Malayalam.

There is disgruntlement among Kerala fishermen near Kochi (Cochin) that coastguard personnel do not know Malayalam. In neighbouring Tamil Nadu a fisherman died because people at a coastguard ship very close could not understand fishermen's distress call in Tamil [<https://www.facebook.com/puli.arason/videos/777098869120637/>] (This video aired in some TV channels and then posted on Facebook in the Internet on March 7, 2017.). What a tragedy because of Indian government's language chauvinism.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) was created in 1969 to guard atomic power plants, oil refineries, major ports, heavy engineering, steel plants, fertilizer units, airports and hydroelectric/thermal power plants owned and controlled by Central Public Sector Undertakings located all over India. There is no requirement that CISF personnel know the local language. It has created hardship to people at airports and other institutions. Guards at NLC India Limited (NLCIL) in Tamil Nadu, formerly Neyveli Lignite Corporation, try to speak to local labourers in Hindi because they do not know Tamil.

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) was formed to protect railway passengers and property. Many of its officers and guards do not know the local language. How can they help passengers if they cannot speak the local language?

Under these circumstances of linguistic arrogance and imperialism of Hindi politicians who set Indian government's language policies, Kerala State teaching police Hindi is sending the wrong message. Ask the Indian government to first require knowledge of state language mandatory to all its security personnel.

6. Where is Malayalam in Medical College Entrance Examinations?

Medical college seats are much coveted by students and parents. Admission to medical colleges is based on the All-India competitive examination NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test). Students may write the examination in Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu. Malayalam is missing from the list. Malayali students cannot write NEET in their mother tongue and thus at least some good Malayali students lost their chance to become doctors. May be if the Kerala State Government did not act subservient to Hindi politicians, Malayalam would have been allowed for NEET.

7. Kerala Stands Up Against Hindi Supremacy

Things seem to be changing in Kerala in the language front after a new chief minister (Pinarayi Vijayan of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)) took charge in May 2016. Here is an example.

Indian Railways used to hold job recruitment examinations (employment examinations) in Hindi and English only. After many complaints from non-Hindi states, a number of other Indian languages were also permitted for Group D (Group C, Level 1 for track maintainers, gatemen, porters, etc.) recruitment examinations when Mamata Banerjee was Railways Minister (Some of the other recruitment examinations are still in Hindi and English only. That should change.)

Railways dropped Malayalam from the allowed languages in 2018. The new Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan did not silently accept it. He protested in social media on the Internet. Railways reversed its decision and Malayalam was reinstated. (TheNewsMinute.com, February 20, 2018; Deccan Herald, February 19, 2018-updated February 23, 2018) May be our elected leaders should speak out against Hindi imposition and Indian government would listen at least some of the times.

8. Analysis and Recommendations

We have to ask the question why Malayalam from Kerala was eliminated in 2018 while the other South Indian languages were kept. The reason may be that Kerala was lukewarm in its opposition to Hindi imposition.

While Karnataka State chief minister spoke strongly against Hindi signs at Bengaluru Metro rail, there was no protest in Kerala over Hindi signs in Kochi Metro. Instead of requiring migrants from Hindi states to learn Malayalam, state police was asked to learn Hindi. Former chief minister Oommen Chandy went as far as to say that rules should be

changed to allow Hindi in Kerala assembly without demanding that Malayali members of parliament should have the same right as Hindi members to speak and ask questions in Malayalam without having to give 24 hour prior notice. Hindi imposers might have thought that Kerala would take Hindi imposition lying down. That was why Malayalam was dropped from Indian Railways examinations and also from medical college entrance examinations (NEET - National Eligibility cum Entrance Test), while all other South Indian languages are allowed.

Elect politicians who would protect the rights and the future of the people of the state, instead of being subservient to Hindi masters. **Vote for politicians who would protect the language rights of the state**, instead of bowing to Hindi supremacy and Hindi imperialism.

(First Published: October 2018)

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6. Opposition to Hindi at Joint State-Central Government Projects (Metros in Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Kolkata, ...)

Thanjai Nalankilli

[This chapter is included in Volume 10 also because of its relevance there.]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Background
2. Whose Money is Funding Metros and Other Joint State-Centre Projects?
3. Is Hindi Use a Form of Hindi Imposition or Hindi Imperialism?
4. Who Benefits from Hindi Signs in Metros?
5. What We Want is Language Equality
6. Why Should Hindis Receive Special Treatment Over and Above Telugus in Bengaluru?
7. Victory at Bengaluru Metro (Namma Metro)
8. Keep Hindi out of Metros in all non-Hindi States Permanently
9. Can Hindi Imposition-Imperialism be Stopped in India? A Test

Abbreviations

AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party
BMRCL - Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited
CLEAR - Campaign for Language Equality And Rights
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
KRV - Karnataka Rakshana Vedike

1. Background

There are three types of government projects in India:

- (1) Indian Central Government Projects,
- (2) Joint Central-State Government Projects, and
- (3) State Government Projects.

Indian Central government projects are funded and managed by the central government, although state governments do contribute some funds to some of these projects. These projects are in matters that come under the "central list (union list)" in the Indian constitution. Joint Central-State government projects are usually in matters that come under the "state list" or "concurrent list". Joint Central-State government projects are funded by both. State government projects are in matters that come under the "state list". They are wholly funded by state governments occasionally with some central government grant.

Hindi imposition at Indian Central Government Projects, like Indian Railways, is well known. Not only Hindi is in all sign boards and communications but employees are forced to pass tests in Hindi and prodded to do more and more work in Hindi. This article is about Hindi imposition or Hindi use in Joint Central-State Government Projects.

2. Whose Money is Funding Metros and Other Joint State-Centre Projects?

One reason given for putting Hindi signboards on metros and other joint state-center projects is that part of the money for these projects come from Indian government (central government). Does Indian government money mean "Hindi people's money" and thus Hindi people have the right to have their language on metros? Indian government gets the money from taxes paid by all the people of India (Hindi and non-Hindi peoples). In fact most non-Hindi states pay more in taxes and get back less in benefits from the Indian government.

Here is some hard data from year 2016 [Reference 1]. Let us compare the 3 Hindi-belt states that give less and get more from Indian government with 3 Southern states that give more and get less. For every Rs. 100 that Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh pays in taxes to India, they get back from India (in the form of central projects, joint state-centre projects, grants, etc.) Rs. 179, Rs. 96 and Rs. 75. In contrast, for every Rs. 100 that Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka pays in taxes to India, they get back from India Rs. 25, Rs. 40 and Rs. 47, respectively. It is clear from the data that these non-Hindi states are not getting any money from Hindi-belt states but are giving money to them. So if money is the criteria Hindi-belt Uttar Pradesh should have Malayalam (Kerala), Tamil (Tamil Nadu), Kannada (Karnataka) signs and not the other way.

So the argument that any project in non-Hindi states receiving funds from Indian government should have Hindi signboards has no merit.

3. Is Hindi Use a Form of Hindi Imposition or Hindi Imperialism?

The most visible central-state projects are the rapid transit systems (metros) in major cities (for example, Kolkata (Calcutta), Kochi (Cochin), Bengaluru (Bangalore), Chennai (Madras),...). Hindi has been used in name boards (along with English and state language) in most Joint Central-State government projects in the past few years. India's Union Ministry of Urban Development issued an order in December 2016 that all metros in non-Hindi states should have signs in Hindi (NDTV Website; June 24, 2017). This made Hindi signs in Joint Central-State government projects mandatory. In the opinion of this writer, when non-Hindi states are forced to use Hindi in their cities, that is Hindi imposition; if not Hindi imposition then definitely Hindi Imperialism.

4. Who Benefits from Hindi Signs in Metros?

The only people who benefit from Hindi signs in metros, be it Bengaluru (Bangalore), Chennai (Madras), Kochi (Cochin) or Kolkata (Calcutta), are the Hindi people who visit

these cities or Hindi migrants who come to these cities to make a living. By forcing non-Hindi area metros to use Hindi name boards, Indian government makes it easy for Hindi migrants to live, work and make a living in non-Hindi cities without learning the local language. Only Hindi people are given this privilege to go anywhere in India and get along with only their mother tongue. No other people in India, be it Telugus, Kannadigas, Bengalis, Marathis, Gujaratis, Tamils, Malayalis, ... can do that.

This makes Hindi people superior over and above all others. This makes non-Hindi peoples second class citizens in their own home-states. We oppose that. We say, **"If you come to our state to make a living, you should learn our language"**.

There is no need for Hindi in metros in non-Hindi states. There is no need to pamper Hindi people all over India. There is no need to give them an elevated position, elevated status in India. They are equal to us. Let them learn our languages when they come to work in our states, in the same way we learn Hindi when we go looking for jobs in their states.

5. What We Want is Language Equality

There are those who say that there is nothing wrong in putting Hindi on Metro signboards as long as Kannada is also there. I say to them, "I will put Hindi on Bengaluru Metro when they put Kannada in Delhi Metro". Reciprocity. You use our language in your Hindi lands, we will use your language in our lands. Reciprocity. Equality. If my people have to learn English or your language to come to your land, then you should also learn English or my language to visit my land. That is equality. Are we not all citizens of India? Are we not all equal? Or, do you think Hindi people have some superior status over all others?

They may say, "If we include Kannada in Delhi Metro, then we will have to include Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam,... It is not practical to do so." Agreed. That applies to Bengaluru Metro too. If we put Hindi in Bengaluru Metro, should we not put Bengali, Tamil, Telugu also? Why a special privilege to Hindi? State language and English is enough.

6. Why Should Hindis Receive Special Treatment Over and Above Telugus in Bengaluru?

There are more Telugus in Bengaluru than Hindis. There are more Tamils in Bengaluru than Hindis. If a third language is to be included in Bengaluru Metro, it should be Telugu, not Hindi.

Why a special privilege for Hindi? Is Hindi superior to all other Indian languages? Hindi politicians who control the Indian government because of their large numbers in parliament say that everyone should learn Hindi and Hindi should be everywhere. Are we in agreement that Hindi is superior to Telugu and bow to Hindi? I am not ready to do so.

7. Victory at Bengaluru Metro (Namma Metro)

Namma Metro (Our Metreo) is the local commuter system in Kannada speaking Karnataka's largest city Bengaluru. It is a Joint State-Centre Project receiving funds from both governments. It is operated by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL). It adopted a three-language formula-Kannada, English and Hindi in signboards and announcements.

A pro-Kannada organization, Banavasi Balaga Prakashana, started an Internet campaign (twitter campaign) with the hashtag #NammaMetroHindiBeda (loosely translated "Our Metro, We don't want Hindi") in June 2017. Their twitter message got support from large numbers of people from Karnataka and other non-Hindi states.

Protests moved from the Internet to the "real world", with demonstrations organized by pro-Kannada organizations such as Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV). Maharashtra Navanirman Sena, Kerala Sangam, Bengaluru Tamil Sangha, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's (DMK) Karnataka unit, language equality group "Campaign for Language Equality And Rights" (CLEAR), and a few Kannada writers and politicians declared support for the protests.

Initially BMRCL said that including Hindi was its decision. Then, as protests intensified, BMRCL Managing Director Pradeep Singh Kharola said that he was following orders from the Indian Government.

As protests continued with no immediate end in site, BMRCL Managing Director told Kannada Development Authority (KDA) Chairman in late July 2017 that Hindi would be dropped from Bengaluru Namma Metro (Deccan Herald; July 26, 2017); all Hindi signs would removed and no more Hindi announcements. [Kannada Development Authority (KDA) is an autonomous body set up by Karnataka state government to protect the interest of Kannada language.]

Karnataka Chief Minister wrote to India's Urban Development Minister that using the three-language formula (Kannada, English and Hindi) in Bengaluru Metro is not reasonable.

We want to point out that state government acted only after protests mounted on the Internet and in the real world. Lesson is that it is up to the general population to take the initiative on protecting language and cultural rights; do not expect the state government to act without public protests and pressure, especially if the ruling party is one of the All-India Parties (Congress Party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)).

We congratulate the people of Karnataka, in general, and all the organizations and individuals who participated in the protests in particular for their hard earned victory.

8. Keep Hindi out of Metros in all non-Hindi States Permanently

While we celebrate our victory, rightly so, we shall not forget that what one Metro Managing Director gives another Metro Managing Director can take away. That is, a year from now or five years from now, another Metro Director can order that Hindi be put back in metro signs and announcements.

Indian government's devious act of stepping back when protests against Hindi imposition intensifies, and reverting back to Hindi imposition after a few years is not new. Around 2004, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) started writing Hindi on national highways kilometre stones in Tamil Nadu. Public protests started. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) wrote to the prime minister and also issued some caustic statements. Under mounting criticism in Tamil Nadu, India's Minister for Shipping and Surface Transport T.R.Baalu issued a statement. Here is an excerpt from The Hindu newspaper, "Mr. Baalu, denying the Chief Minister's charge that Hindi words are being inscribed on milestones on national highways in Tamil Nadu, said that in November he had instructed the National Highways officials to write the names of towns and distance in kilometres in Tamil and English." (Hindu; December 22, 2004).

In spite of the Indian government minister Baalu's clear statement that names of towns on highway stones would be in Tamil and English, twelve years later in early 2017, English was removed and town names were written in Tamil and Hindi only (Hindustan Times; March 31, 2017). Protests arose in Tamil Nadu and some protesters painted black over Hindi names. "Sensing the simmering tension over the issue, National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) authorities issued instructions to erase the newly-included Hindi scripts. It was evident in Vellore city. The new Hindi markings on several milestones along the 533 km stretch, NH 75, between Bantval in Karnataka and Vellore in Tamil Nadu, have been erased and replaced with names of places in English" (Times of India; April 10, 2017).

As sure as sun will rise again tomorrow morning, Hindi signs will come again on national highways in a few years. The same is true with Hindi signs in Bengaluru Namma Metro also.

Only way to stop is for a law passed in parliament that language policy in joint state-centre projects would be made solely by the state government irrespective of how much central government fund was received. Is it possible to get such a law passed in the Indian parliament? I do not think so. So any minister or official can put back Hindi in metros and other joint state-centre projects.

We shall not stop the pressure on politicians until a suitable law is enacted in parliament.

9. Can Hindi Imposition-Imperialism be Stopped in India? A Test

I am of the opinion that Indian Constitution cannot be amended to give all languages equal status because it is numerically impossible to get the necessary two-thirds votes in parliament. There are enough Hindi members of parliament to block any amendment.

Yet some of my well-meaning friends say that we can amend the Indian constitution and end Hindi imposition. Let us make passing a law on state-centre projects our litmus test. Let us mobilize all our efforts to get such a law passed within three years. If we cannot pass such a language-equality law that requires only 50% votes in parliament, how can we expect to amend the constitution that requires two-thirds majority in parliament?

REFERENCE

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7. Manipur Group Bans Hindi Movies

L. Varadarajan

In the year 2000, a Manipur rebel group banned Hindi movies and television shows in Manipur because they were allegedly destroying Manipuri culture and language. Movie theatres and cable television operators obliged. The rebel group also burnt several thousand videocassettes of Hindi films as a protest against the "Indianization" of Manipur. Movie theaters stopped screening Hindi movies. Because Hindi movies had throttled the local Manipuri movie industry, there were very few Manipuri films to screen. Some theaters showed the few available English movies. Others closed their theaters rather than screen Hindi movies and disobey Revolutionary Peoples Front's ban on Hindi movies. Cable television stations also shut down or operated only a few hours because there were not sufficient Manipuri programmes to telecast. Above information is based on: Reuters News, December 6, 2000; Rediff on the Net, October 31, 2000.

NOTE: South Indian language (Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu) movie industry is still vibrant and flourishing because Hindi is not yet widely understood although more and more people are learning because of Indian government's language policies. Once Hindi takes further inroads into South India, South Indian language movies will slowly fade out. Beware and take action. Oppose India's Hindi imposition policies and actions.

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8. Hindi Movies and the Indian Government

P. Kumaresan

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1. Introduction
2. Indian Television
3. Hindi Movies and Television
4. Lesson from this Episode
5. Discrimination in Royalty Payments
6. Indian Embassies and Hindi Movies
7. Discrimination in Bank Loans

1. Introduction

Movie industry comes under the jurisdiction of state governments (under "States List" in the constitution). The Indian Government (that is, the Central Government or Union Government, as it is often referred to), dominated and controlled by Hindi politicians, are working hard to bring it under the "Concurrent List" and thus under the dual jurisdiction of both state and union governments (Thinaboomi: Tamil newspaper, October 12, 1998). Non-Hindi people should vehemently oppose this move because once the Indian Government gets dual jurisdiction over the movie industry, they can usurp state authority and use all the powers and finances of the Indian Government to promote Hindi movie industry, to the detriment of other language movies.

While Hindi politicians are maneuvering to bring movie industry under Indian Government jurisdiction, it is not waiting in its effort to help the Hindi movie industry. It is using other indirect means to help. Here are couple of examples.

2. Indian Television

All broadcast television in India is owned and operated by the Indian Government. Private companies are allowed only to operate cable-cast and satellite-cast television. While broadcast television is free and available for view every nook and corner of India, cable/satellite television is available only in large urban areas and you have to pay for it. So the vast majority of people watch only the government-operated broadcast television (called Doordharshan (means television in Hindi)). There are mainly two broadcast channels - the national channel and the regional channel. The former is broadcast all over India, while the latter is broadcast only in their respective regions (for example, Tamil Nadu). Also, the former is seen every nook and corner, even in most small villages. The latter is not so widely available - many villages cannot receive the regional channel. Bulk of the national channel programs are in Hindi, with a few hours of English and some Sanskrit programs (yes, programs in Sanskrit, a language understood by less than one-

hundredth of one percent of the Indians, are broadcast throughout India every day, seven days a week). Bulk of the regional channel programs is in the local languages, with some hours of Hindi and a few hours of English programs as well. (Why many hours of Hindi programs are included in regional channels while they already have the lion's share of hours on the national channel?)

3. Hindi Movies and Television

Now, coming back to our discussion of Hindi movies and television, the national channel broadcasts a large number of Hindi movies. It used to show a few non-Hindi movies ("regional language" movies) also because of extensive pressure from the regional movies industry. Then a few years ago, they announced that henceforth only award-winning regional language movies will be shown on national channel while any two-bit Hindi movie got broadcast. In other words, the Indian Government is telling that **any Hindi movie is as good as an award-winning regional language movie!**

That was not the end. In October 2000, Indian Government controlled Prasar Bharati that operates Indian broadcast television announced that it would not show any regional-language movies at all on national channel, only Hindi movies will be shown. The South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce protested strongly and announced that it would organize protests in South India. Faced with public protest, Indian Government backed down in December 2000.

4. Lesson from this Episode

Let us not be too happy that we have thwarted Indian Government's move vis-a-vis regional language movies on television. Remember that only about 40% of the Indian population has Hindi as the mother tongue. Less than one-fourth the taxes are paid by Hindi states. **Yet about 95% of the movies shown on taxpayer funded national channel are in Hindi.** The South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce has merely stopped the Indian Government from making it 100%. It is not a victory; it is a defeat for non-Hindi film industry.

It may even be a temporary victory. If past experience is any guide, number of non-Hindi movies will be slowly decrease even further a few years from now and without any announcement reduced to just half-a-dozen movies a year. There is ample precedence to this. Here is an example. Back when M.G. Ramachandran was Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, introduction of Hindi newscasts in the Chennai Channel (Madras Channel) caused resentment among Chennai area residents and mass protests loomed. Chief Minister Ramachandran rushed to New Delhi and told the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that if the government did not back down he would not be responsible for what could happen. Even his party may join in the protests. The Prime Minister backed down. Then, after a few years, Hindi newscasts were quietly re-introduced. How many times can we organize mass protests?

5. Discrimination in Royalty Payments

Royalty payment is made to the movie producers each time a movie is broadcast on television. The Indian Government set it at 8 lakh Rupees for national channel broadcasts (about 95% of them Hindi movies) and 1 lakh Rupees for regional channel broadcasts (10 lakh = 1 million). The reason is that more people watch the national channel than each regional channel.

In 2000, the Indian Government controlled Prasar Bharati that operates broadcast television announced that royalties for national channel broadcasts would be increased by 50% to 12 lakh Rupees but there would be no such increase for broadcasts in regional channels, royalties would stay at 1 lakh Rupees. Since about 95% of the movies broadcast on the national channel are Hindi movies, this is in fact a discrimination against non-Hindi movies.

In fact, even the previous 8-to-1 ratio (let alone the new 12-to-1 ratio) in royalties for national and regional channel broadcasts was tilted in favor of the former (about 95 % of which are Hindi movies) because the average ratio of viewership for Tamil or Telugu movies on regional channels were never as low as one-eighth that of Hindi movie broadcasts on national channel. The new 12-to-1 ratio is a whopping tilt in favor of Hindi movies and discrimination against non-Hindi movies.

6. Indian Embassies and Hindi Movies

The Indian Government is using even Indian embassies abroad to promote Hindi movies. In May 2000, Indian Embassy in Israel organized a Hindi Film Week in the city of Tel Aviv. We would not object if the Indian Embassies promote all Indian movies, not just Hindi movies. It does not matter to the Israelis whether the language is Hindi or Assamese or Malayalam or Punjabi, or ... They do not understand any of these languages. If they watch these movies they would watch them for visual effects or artistry. So why promote only Hindi movies and ignore all other movies. The number of non-Hindi movies produced every year in India is much higher than the number of Hindi movies. In fact, in some years there are more Telugu movies produced than Hindi movies; in some years there are more Tamil movies produced than Hindi movies. Do Hindi politicians who dominate and control the Indian Government hold the opinion that non-Hindi movies are of such low quality that they should not be shown abroad, and that only Hindi movies have the quality to merit showings abroad?

7. Discrimination in Bank Loans (AN UPDATE by Thanjai Nalankilli; July 20, 2004)

In 2001, Industrial Development Bank of India, operated by the Indian Government, started lending money to film industry [The Hindu; March 31, 2001]. As of now it had lent money for the production of 23 Hindi movies, 3 Telugu movies and 2 Tamil movies. As we had predicted 6 years ago [see Chapter 2], lion's share of the funding has gone to Hindi movies, although Telugu film industry and Tamil film industry each produce almost as many movies as Hindi. In fact, in some years more Telugu movies are produced than Hindi movies, and in some years more Tamil movies are produced than

Hindi movies. Yet only 3 Telugu movies and 2 Tamil movies got funding from Industrial Development Bank of India, while 23 Hindi films got funding from it. Is it fair?

(NOTE: The Indian Government started the Industrial Development Bank of India with 100% ownership. Later about 28% of the shares were sold to private parties. As of this writing, Indian Government is the majority owner of Industrial Development Bank of India (owns 72.14% of the bank) and thus major decisions are made by the Government of India.)

(First Published: December 2000; Updated: August 2004)

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9. Indian Interference into Tamil Movies

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Into the Tamil Cinema Industry
3. Discrimination in Bank Loans

1. Introduction

The Indian government, dominated and controlled by politicians from the Hindi heartland, wants to impose Hindi language and Hindi culture into every aspect of every non-Hindi people in the "Indian Union". This is the situation irrespective of which party is in power or who the Prime Minister is. While most non-Hindi people are offended sometime or other by the high-handedness of Hindi imposition and Hindi imperialism, it is the people of Tamil Nadu who resist and oppose Hindi imposition most vehemently and consistently, although with very little success.

The Indian government imposes Hindi through every possible avenue. **Every department in every central government (Indian government) ministry has an office in it to oversee that Hindi is used to the fullest possible extent in the affairs of that department.** Every Indian (central) government employee has to study Hindi if he/she does not already know the language. You hear Hindi announcements and Hindi signs in all railway stations, even those in remote areas of Tamil Nadu where no one but the stationmaster and the ticket clerk know a little Hindi. (They know Hindi a little because, as central government employees, they have to.) Go to the post office, Indian-Government owned banks, telephone offices and insurance offices. You will see Hindi in one way or other because all these departments come under central government jurisdiction. Then, of course, there is the central government run television. Hindi, Hindi all the time. Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, Hindi programmes can be seen **for free** even in remote villages of Tamil Nadu where very few people know Hindi. But, alas, they will be hard pressed to find a Tamil program if they are not living in areas where cable television is available **for a price**.

2. Into Tamil Cinema Industry

"Television will be used as a vehicle for propagating Hindi", so said the former broadcasting and communications minister Gujral a few years ago. The only oasis for Tamil people for Tamil entertainment seemed to be Tamil movies. Until now movies are private sector and laws governing them (except for censorship) came under state government jurisdiction. More movies were produced in Tamil some years than in Hindi. This is the case with Telugu too. This caught the attention of Hindi politicians. So they

want to get some control over the movies too. Another vehicle for them to thrust Hindi into non-Hindi throats, as they are currently doing with television. But there is a minor problem. As we said before, movie industry comes under state government jurisdiction. What to do?

Recently the Indian government proposed that movies be brought under the dual jurisdiction of state and central government. Once it is done, Hindi politicians can push their weight around in the movie industry also to impose Hindi through movies, as they are now doing with television. Movies are a very popular entertainment for the masses and so a great vehicle to impose Hindi language and Hindi culture on the Tamil masses. They are doing it very well with television, and now movies too!

This is a calculated move. At about the same time the Indian government proposed that movies be brought under the dual jurisdiction of state and central governments, it is also planning to set up a fund to finance (loans, grants) movies. The die is cast. The vice is being tightened. Guess which films will get the lion's share of this Indian government fund for movies? You guessed right! Hindi films will get the lion's share although about 75% of the money for this fund will come from non-Hindi taxpayers. If there is any doubt, look at television. **About 90% of Indian government funds for television production goes to Hindi programs** and the remaining is shared by all other languages. The same thing will happen in the movie industry also once the Indian government gets jurisdiction over the movie industry.

Sooner or later, slowly but surely, Tamil movie industry will be suffocated in the same way Tamil programs are suffocated in Indian government controlled television.

The ultimate goal of Indian government is to sideline all non-Hindi languages in the "Indian Union" as languages for official use, education, entertainment and all other important aspects of life. However vehemently we protest, this will happen as long as Tamil Nadu is a state within the "Indian Union". We protested Hindi imposition in television. It is like dogs barking at the sun. No effect. We protested Hindi imposition in central government offices. No effect. What can we do?

3. UPDATE (July 20, 2004): Discrimination in Bank Loans

Almost six years ago, I published the above article. In it I wrote, "Indian Government is planning to set up a fund to finance (loan) movies. The die is cast. The vice is being tightened. Guess which films will get the lion's share of this Indian government fund for movies? You guessed right! Hindi films will get the lion's share although about 75% of the money for this fund will come from non-Hindi taxpayers." (Paragraph 3 of Section 2 of the article).

Now we have data. In 2001, Industrial Development Bank of India, operated by the Indian Government, started lending money to film industry [The Hindu; March 31, 2001]. As of now it had lent money for the production of 23 Hindi movies, 3 Telugu movies and 2 Tamil movies. As we predicted 6 years ago in the article above, lion's share

of the funding has gone to Hindi movies, although Telugu film industry and Tamil film industry each produce almost as many movies as Hindi. In fact, in some years more Telugu movies are produced than Hindi movies, and in some years more Tamil movies are produced than Hindi movies. Yet only 3 Telugu movies and 2 Tamil movies got funding from Industrial Development Bank of India, while 23 Hindi films got funding from it. Is it fair?

(NOTE: The Indian Government started the Industrial Development Bank of India with 100% ownership. Later about 28% of the shares were sold to private parties. As of this writing, Indian Government is the majority owner of Industrial Development Bank of India (owns 72.14% of the bank) and thus major decisions are made by the Government of India.)

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10. Indian Government Enters the Publishing Industry

Thanjai Nalankilli

Wherever the Indian Government enters, there follows Hindi behind it. Hindi politicians who dominate the Indian Government would say that it is the constitutional obligation of the Indian Government to introduce, promote, propagate and use Hindi wherever it has an influence. All other languages will of course be ignored although about two-thirds of the Indian Government revenues come from non-Hindi peoples.

It is with this background in mind that we oppose Indian Government's interest in helping non-English book publishers and in setting up a "**National Translation Board**" to translate non-English books into English and other languages. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee expressed this interest in February 2002. We oppose it because we know that much of the Indian Government funds (taxpayer monies) allocated for this project will go for Hindi books. What is the basis for this statement?

1)

"Annual Programme 2002-2003" issued by the Department of Official Language in March 2002 ordered that at least 50% of the Indian government library grants should go for the purchase of Hindi books (remember, it can be more than 50%; no limit on that). An impartial order would be that monies should be allocated to different language books approximately in the same proportion as the population of each language, with some funds allocated for English books too because of the vast scientific literature available in English only.

2)

Recently the Indian Government introduced an awards scheme to encourage technical and scientific book writing in Hindi (National Awards scheme for original book writing on Gyan -Vigyan). Of course there is no such encouragement for non-Hindi languages although taxes paid by non-Hindi peoples are used for this purpose.

3)

In 2010s, Indian government operated Southern Railways opened "Hindi Libraries" at several railway stations in Tamil Nadu; these libraries would contain only Hindi publications (no state language or English). Is it a fair allocation of funds to open Hindi libraries in stations in, for example, Tuticorin, Dindigul, Palani and Karaikudi? Not even 5% of passengers may be Hindi speakers? As could be expected, very few people entered these libraries. People were also complaining about these "Hindi Libraries" in railway stations. So, in 2019, Southern Railways decided to include Tamil (state language) and English publications also. Remember, yet 50% of the publications would be in Hindi, and the remaining 50% would be shared among state language and English. [Times of India; December 28, 2019]. This is unfair too. May be 5% of the people at these stations read Hindi publications, why allocate 50% monies to Hindi. Arrogance and imperialism of Hindi politicians.

4)

India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) sent an "advisory notice" to airlines that equal numbers of English and Hindi newspapers be available for passengers in-flight (Economic Times; July 20, 2017). Provide newspapers in the languages of the departure and destination cities, instead of Hindi. Why do we need Hindi magazines in a flight between Tamil Nadu (Tamil language) and Kerala (Malayalam language)?

These orders are a boom to publishers of Hindi books, magazines and newspapers.

With such a record in its recent past, it is reasonable to conclude that lion's share of the money allocated for book-publishing grants will go for Hindi books. Most of the books translated into English and other languages would be Hindi books. In summary Tamil and other non-Hindi peoples will be subsidizing Hindi books.

What is the alternative? In a country like India, with so many cultures and languages, cultural and language development, preservation and propagation (including book publishing and translation) should be left to the states. Finances (tax revenues) should be devolved to the states so the state governments have revenues to fund these projects. Only then will all languages receive fair treatment. Otherwise Indian government would spend bulk of the allocated budget for Hindi books and throw away a pittance to other languages. Tamil Nadu had pleaded for devolution of revenues for over a quarter of a century. Absolutely nothing has happened. We do not expect anything to happen in the future either. Quarter century is more than enough of a wait. In our opinion, future of non-Hindi cultures and languages within India is bleak. What are we going to do?

(First Published: June 2002; Updated: December 2019)

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